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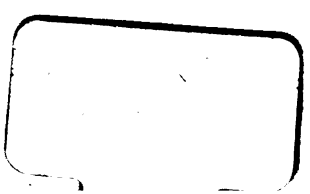
TIDES OF COMMERCE

Verse of the Railroad

By William Cary Sanger Jr.

KE 3529



For President

A. Lawrence Lowell

with very best

wishes from

Mary Langer

Harvard 1916.

TIDES OF COMMERCE

TIDES OF COMMERCE

VERSE OF THE RAILROAD

BY
WM. CARY SANGER, Jr.

NEW YORK
COUNTRY LIFE PRESS
1916

KE 3029

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June 29, 1943

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DEDICATION

Sweep on, vast Tide of Commerce—night and day—
Afar on steel-shod track or ocean trail,
Bearing the burdens for the world's advance,
Linking the varied lands by sea and rail.
Without thy aid what would our work avail?
Civilization owes its spread to thee;
So serve the world, till man's long fight is won,
When all our work on earth at last is done.

1911

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Preface

"Tides of Commerce" first appeared in book form during the spring of 1915, and a second edition was printed before the close of the year. In the present edition a few new poems have been added and several minor changes have been made, which include the recording of the year in which each poem was written. This volume contains work done while the author was at school and in college, many of the verses having been originally published in the "Vindex" of St. Mark's School during the years 1910-1912, and others in the "Harvard Advocate" from 1913 to 1916. "The City of Toil and Dreams" by the same author contains additional poems written while at school and in college.

The writer wishes to express his thanks to those friends who have helped him by their criticisms and suggestions.

W. C. S., Jr.

New York City,
April, 1916.

Introduction—1912

Since the earliest dawn of civilization, commerce and trade have been the determining factors in the making and unmaking of cities, nations, and empires. For commercial development, statesmen have planned, warriors have fought, armies have battled, and kings have fallen. In looking backward over the record of the past it may well be said that industrial traffic has been the moulder, if not the very maker of history. The growth and dominion of Nineveh stood as a witness of this fact; Tyre and Venice again proved it; and to-day the power of commerce is shown by such cities as Hamburg, London, and New York.

But, aside from its influence in changing and extending boundaries, transportation in its broadest sense has been the means of accomplishing a far better and far greater work. It has been the vanguard of civilization and progress, and by its all encompassing and far flung network it has united the scattered nations; and has extended the realms of knowledge, law, and Christianity to the uttermost bounds of the world.

And in this connection, the improvements in the means of transportation have been the stepping-stones by which civilization has spread. Before the advent of steam and electricity it was absolutely impossible

for China and North America or England and Central Africa to become closely and intimately related. The barriers of distance and time were too great. Today, however, by means of railroads, steamers, and telegraphs, no section of the world need be isolated, for ideals, thoughts, and commodities can be quickly and conveniently interchanged. And, in the far-away future, as distance continues to be still more effectively eliminated, the greatest dream of the ages may at length come true—a "United Federation of the World." If this vision of the past is to be realized, if this dream is indeed to come true, commerce, industrial development and rapid transportation are to be the concrete means by which this end is to be accomplished.

It must not be inferred that commercial activity is entirely and absolutely good; far from it, much of it is distinctly bad—for in common with all other world-wide enterprises, it has had its full share of the worthless as well as the noble. Taken as a whole, however, the effect of commerce is overwhelmingly good, and like all other great developments, by its ups and downs, failures and successes, sins and blessings, it goes on slowly but surely advancing and laying the certain foundations for that better and greater day which is to come.

This little volume is published in the hope that it may do its part in calling attention to the interest and

romance in the development of transportation and commerce and to the men whose lives are spent in the various departments of this work and service.

W. C. S., JR.

December, 1912.

N. B.—1914. The present European War in no way alters the fundamental facts and opinions set forth in the above introduction. The war, extensive and terrible though it is, should be regarded in the broader light of the world's history since the dawn of civilization, due consideration being taken of the opportunities which await Humanity in the far-distant future. When thus viewed, the war becomes merely a temporary set-back in the development and resistless progress of Mankind.

W. C. S., JR.

November 19, 1914.

The Harvest

There's a message, perhaps you have heard it,
  Coming from fields afar,
Calling you out to the harvest
  With the dawn and the morning star.
From coral and palm to glacier,
  From harbor to mountain chain,
Voices are calling for reapers
  Who are needed to harvest the grain.

Each has his work before him,
  Each has his task to do,
Steamer and dock and derrick,
  Tower and yard and crew,
Desk and bench and office,
  Tunnel and mine and rail—
All are calling for workers,
  Calling you out on the trail.

You, who have heard the summons,
  You who have learned the way,
Go—hurry on to the battle,
  Take up your task to-day.

For the world is awaiting the workers,
Waiting—full well you know;
Up and on to the harvest,
For the fields await you—go.

1911

Song of the Empire Builders

Builders of Empire we—
Moulders of Fate and Destiny.
Far to the bounds of the last, lone land—
Through the wastes untrod, and the trackless sand,
To the realms where the snow-capped mountains stand,
Go the vanguards of our trade.

Never a range too high,
Never a waste too dry,
But our ranks sweep on to the distant land
In numbers strong—a conquering band,
Knowing no fear—for we understand
The work that is ours to do.

Forward is our cry,
Though the price we pay is high;
For the seasons go and come anew—
But many a man of our far-called crew
Goes out to the task he is told to do—
Goes—and returns no more.

We conquer the plains and heights
From the palm to the northern lights,
And the waste gives way to the homes of men,
To farm, and city, and track, and train,
And the ancient hills give back again
The wealth they have held for years.

We launch new ships to trade
With lands we have found and made;
We open new fields for the world's supply,
We link them firmly with rail and tie
To the cities afar—that none may die
For want of their daily bread.

Builders of Empire, we—
Vessel, and track and quay
Tell of the lines our men surveyed,
Of the farms new-tilled, of the land that paid,
Of the cities and towns our work has made—
A world wide Empire-realm.

1911

Electricity

A flash of blue-white fire,
  A crackling trail of light,
A voice along a wire,
  A whisper in the night.

Afar from the lonely tower,
  Loosed, unfettered, free,
A grim, mysterious power,
  I answer the ship at sea.

In subway, street, or dwelling,
  Wherever the lines may reach,
There comes my current, telling
  Of power, light, and speech.

Along the silent wires,
  Over the drifting snows,
My pulse that never tires
  Beats and throbs and flows.

I speak beneath the ocean,
  Deep on mystic trails;
I thrill the land with motion,
  And race along the rails.

A flash of blue-white fire,
  A crackling trail of light,
A voice along a wire,
  A whisper in the night.

1912

Sentinels of the Line

(With acknowledgments to R. K.)

In the flush of the summer heat,
  In the chill of the winter's snow,
The pulses of industry beat,
  The tides of traffic flow;
And the engineers—they know
  What is staked on the signals they see,
Do we fail in the trust that is placed in our hands?
  (Clear! Line Clear!)—Not we.

Little the passengers know
  (And little the passengers care)
The meaning of what we show;
  Danger! Caution! All clear!
Along the line, far and near,
  We watch o'er the trains on their way;
Do the passengers thank us as on they go?
  (Clear! Line Clear!)—Not they.

When the sun has set in the west,
  And the shadows of night hold sway,
When the world seeks its well-earned rest,

And forgets the cares of the day;
Do we cast our cares away?
We watch, and the engineers see,
Do we fail them at night when they need us most?
(Green. All clear!)—Not we.

When the storms their harvests reap,
And the wind on the mountain roars,
When the cottages all are asleep,
And gusts shake the windows and doors,
Do we cease to watch? Do we pause?
Never, nor ask for pay,
Do the passengers dream of the lives that we guard?
(Yellow! Slow down!)—Not they.

In the rush of the traffic's tide,
When the overtime shifts are on,
When the coal from the mountain side
To the crowded yard is borne;
And the crews come weary and worn,
From the west and the ports by the sea,
Do we slacken our watch through the busy night?
(Red! Line blocked!)—Not we.

'Neath the starlit skies' faint glow
And the pale moon's specter light,
On the rails they've traveled and know
Go the couriers grim of the night.

Heralds of power and might—
But trusting the signals they see,
Do we fail in the trust they have placed in our hands?
(Green! All clear!)—Not we.

1911

Seafarer's Song of the Night

We're swinging her into the dawn, boys,
  Over the plunging seas—
A battle of nerve and brawn, boys,
  Into the battering breeze.
The spray is flying afar, boys,
  The seas are thundering by,
As we follow the eastern star, boys,
  Under a clearing sky.

The liner rears—and falls,
  Drenched with the smoking spray,
Into a trough that appalls,
  Plunges—and ships it gray;
Then rises away to the stars,
  Pouring the water astern;
While over the hatches and spars
  The spray clouds sweep and churn.

The deckworks shudder and groan;
  Rigging, and rope, and mast
Tremble and quiver and moan,
  Swayed in the stinging blast;

Seafarer's Song of the Night

The smoke is blown to the west,
  Low, hard down a-lee;
And there's not much time for rest
  In a gale on the open sea.

On every side are waves,
  Multitudinous, vast,
And we watch how the ship behaves
  As the staggering seas go past;
"All snug," as she lifts and keels,
  Is the story the liner tells,
While she rears and swings and reels
  In the gray, tumultuous swells.

The stars in the sky grow dim, boys,
  The east begins to glow,
But the ocean still is grim, boys,
  And the waves still surge below;
A battle of nerve and brawn, boys,
  As the plunging seas go by,
For we're swinging her into the dawn, boys,
  Under a clearing sky.

1914

The Christmas Mails

The old year's nearly past,
  And Christmas time is here;
The weary world at last
  Dreams of returning cheer.
In nations near and far
  All cares are cast away,
And the stars are bright in the frosty night,
  For to-morrow is Christmas Day!

The railroad plays its part
  In making the season gay,
Cheering many a heart
  And brightening many a way.
Can you hear the trains in the night
  Humming along the rails,
Spreading their cheer afar and near,
  Trains with the Christmas mails?

Close by the window panes
  Children and parents stand
And wait for the Christmas trains
  That are hastening over the land.

And the old are awaiting the mails
  That will call back the memories dear,
Of the Christmas Chimes of bygone times
  And friends no longer near.

The letters from land and sea
  Are welcomed at every door,
And they're waiting the trains with glee
  In the homes of the rich and the poor;
For the mail's no respecter of wealth,
  The high and the low are the same;
To valley and town the mails come down,
  Brought in the government's name.

Hark! far away, do you hear
  The notes of distant bells?
The joyful sound comes near;
  Do you know the tale it tells?
It's the song of the Christmas mails,
  And they're hastening on to-night;
Their headlights glow on the frosty snow
  As they hurry along in their flight.

The mails come in from afar,
  From the lands of the east and the west;
They're swung from the ship to the car
  And they're off on their inland quest;

Can you hear the trains in the night
  Roaring along the rails?
They sing "Good cheer, afar and near,"
  For they carry the Christmas mails.

1911

Fifty-Four Forty Retired

("Locomotive 5440 has been retired from the service")

Fifty-four forty's retired,
He was called the "Old Man of the Rail,"
And the boys of the line all liked him,
For he never was known to fail;
And now at the General Office
(As the charts and the records tell)
They've balanced accounts in the ledger—
And Fifty-four forty's done well.

He's gone to that greatest of railroads
Where the good locomotives go;
To a line where there's never a landslide,
Or trouble from sleet or snow.
The blocks show "Clear" down the tangents,
There's never a wreck or a break;
Not even a journal gets heated,
And nobody makes a mistake.

When Fifty-four forty was running,
Any day, in the sun or the rain,

You could see him climbing the mountains,
With his heavy rumbling train.
His course lay over the ranges
And down through valley and glen;
His life was a life of service,
His work was to work for men.

And many a man may envy
That record and life and work,
For Fifty-four forty was steady,
He'd never "get tired" or shirk;
And there's many a man in the roundhouse
Who'll be missing his whistle and bell,
For Fifty-four forty's retired—
And Fifty-four forty's done well.

1912

The Pioneers

Where the distant ranges tower with their snow-
capped peaks and ledges,
Saffron colored in the sunset's dying glow;
Where the mountain goat and eagle reign supreme on
crag and summit
And the mist hangs in the canyons down below;

Where no sound of cities' clamor ever comes to wake
the echoes,
And the solemn stillness rules the night and day;
Where the lonely, time-scarred mountains stand like
warders of the ranges—
There the pioneers are blazing out the way.

Over prairies to the desert—over sand dunes to the
mountains,
Through the passes to the plains that lie beyond;
Driving onward, ever onward in the face of drought
and blizzard,
Thus—and only thus—the fertile land is found.

Hard and fierce the long-fought battle with the forces
of the ranges,

Bitter hunger, hopeless weariness and thirst;
Even now, the dust of many lies forgotten on the passes
Where the force of crag and desert did its worst.

Not for them the people's praises and the eulogizing tombstones,
Or the thanks of future settlers on the land,
They are dust—and all their efforts and their labors may seem wasted,
But the lonely crags and mountains understand.

Yes, they've seen the leaders perish, but they know the trail's advancing,
For they see the thin, blue smoke that tells the tale
Of the lighted camp fires burning—far below—down in the valley,
Where the remnant still is blazing out the trail.

Storms may halt them—death may check them, for a time perhaps their efforts
May seem lost with not a hope for going on;
But though hindered and though baffled, never can the work be slackened
Till the last, long range of mountain chains is won.

1911

Road-Service Rules

First and last of all the Orders
  To be followed day and night:
Keep your mind and keep your body
  Clean and strong and clear and right.

Be on time to take your places,
  Flagman, trainman, engineer,
Baggage master and conductor;
  And be sure your eyesight's clear.

Then inspect your apparatus,
  Brakes and signals, lights and all;
See that every bolt and bearing
  Will not fail you when you call.

See that things are in their places,
  Look to it that all is clean.
Little need there is to tell you
  What is staked on the machine.

Then you're ready for the signal,
  All your preparations done,
And your conscience will be easy
  When you've started on your run.

You, whose work is in the Coaches
And the Pullmans—take good care
To be courteous and kindly,
To be tolerant and fair.

Help them *all* with equal gladness:
Young and rich—or old and gray;
Don't forget that words of kindness
Help to cheer them on their way.

Flagmen—when your train is halted
And your orders send you back,
Take your fuses and torpedoes
And your flag—and guard your track.

You who man the roaring engine—
Watch the signal arms by day;
"Caution," "Clear," or "Stop"—they'll tell you
Of the trains along your way.

When the passengers are sleeping
And you're racing through the night,
Watch your signals—trust their message,
They shall guide you by their light.

Through the endless miles of darkness
"Let her drive"—and never fear;
Trust the Master Train Dispatcher,
Trust the lamps that beckon clear.

Road-Service Rules

Ever watchful, ever careful,
Ever steady—true as steel;
Fearless—watch the lights before you,
While the flying shadows reel.

Racing down the level tangents,
Creeping up the mountain climb,
Mind your train—and keep her steady,
And you'll bring her in "On time."

First and last of all the orders
To be followed day and night:
Keep your mind and keep your body
Clean and strong and clear and right.

1913

Electric Locomotives

Silent as night we make our flight
  Through the shadowy, terminal zone.
With never a sound but the echoing ground
  And our warning bell's clear tone,
We skim and trail along the rail,
  Silent, fleet, alone.

By the glow of the stars we race with our cars,
  Till the terminal lights are near;
The click of the wheel and the purr of the steel
  Are the gladdening sounds we hear
As we set the pace in our headlong race,
  When the signal lights show clear.

In snow or rain we haul our train,
  Sure of our speed and power,
And the semaphores gleam—but the passengers dream
  As we rush past bridge and tower,
Till we halt on time to the echoing chime
  When the big clock makes the hour.

Electric Locomotives

Over the trails we haul the mails
That travel afar in the night,
And whirling down, we pass each town—
A flare of electric light.
Silent and grim, we trust to Him
In the rush of our shadowy flight.

1912

In the Starlit Valley

In the lonely, starlit valley,
  Where the mountains loom, black-blue,
Like a phantom of light in the dusk of the night,
  The "Limited" train goes through.

The rails awake, and the echoes
  Ring from rock and crest,
And thunder away as the hills repay
  The song of the Flyer's quest.

The rear lights dwindle and vanish,
  The rails again are still;
The echoes cease—and all is peace
  On valley, ridge, and hill.

1912

Steam

By the roar of a million mills,
  By the whirl of a million wheels;
By the grim refrain of the racing train,
  And the ship that rears and reels;

By the donkey engine's chatter,
  And the hoist that lifts the block;
By the soothing purr where the flywheels whir,
  By the drills that pierce the rock;

By the clatter of shoveled coal,
  And the clank of the firebox door,
By the power and might of the blinding light
  Where the white-hot fires roar;

By the flash of flying steel,
  Where the crosshead pinions gleam,
I follow the trail of wave and rail,
  I—the Toiler—Steam.

Servant of all the world;
  My task it is to be
A tireless power that toils each hour,
  Over the land and sea.

When the Liner Sailed

We parted at the steamer's side
  Before they cast the hawsers clear,
The turning of the restless tide
    Was near.

Oh, world of hope and love and strife,
  Perhaps it's well for me to say
There'd been a quarrel—such is life—
    That day.

I hoped that when we came to part
  She'd choose the one alternative,
And, being forgiven—in her heart
    Forgive.

A moment there she turned her head,
  And looked away, as if to sigh,
Then raised her eyes to mine and said
    "Good-by."

And that was all; no word of cheer,
  So quiet and so cold she seemed,
But yet I thought I saw a tear
    That gleamed.

When the Liner Sailed

With mingled anger, pain and love,
I watched her enter at the side,
That loomed so black and vast above
The tide.

The whistle echoed through the town,
The towering vessel backed away,
And, swinging seaward, started down
The bay.

1913

In the Care of the Engineer

The sunset flares—the skyline glares
  Deep black against the gold,
On land and stream the lanterns gleam,
  Silent are house and fold;
The workmen cease and evening peace
  Descends on young and old.

But along the trail of the gleaming rail
  We race with the flying time.
The bridges wake and the rock-cuts shake
  To the voice of our whistle's chime;
We rouse the night in our thundering flight
  And the rails are a roaring rhyme.

With a ringing "cling-lock-whutna-whing"
  The switches crash below.
The signals flare as on we tear,
  For they're "letting the engine go";
And the reeling track goes roaring back
  At ninety an hour or so.

In the Care of the Engineer

With a trailing swerve we round a curve,
  Where the mountain towers high,
And the strained rails sing and whine and ring
  As the reeling train goes by;
Till we plunge in the gloom of a tunnel's tomb
  And the blackness hides the sky.

With a hollow moan the girders groan
  As on to a bridge we roar,
And the song of the track is echoed back
  By rivet and beam and floor,
Till the deadened sound of the firmer ground
  Is reached on the other shore.

Cozy and warm, we're safe from harm
  Wherever the train may go;
Through towns blue-white with the pale moon's light
  On roof and street below,
Through valleys deep where rivers creep
  All dim in the starlit glow.

But the day is done and the long night's run
  Is a time for the sleep of the blest;
The drowsy purr of the dull wheels' whir
  Will lull our souls to rest
As we follow the stream where the lamplights gleam,
  Or round the mountain crest.

So on we go—there's a man we know
  Who'll watch if the blocks are "clear";
We'll soon be asleep and we'll slumber deep
  With never a thought of fear;
Our cares will cease and we'll rest in peace,
  And we'll trust to the engineer.

1913

The Freights

Bearing the weight of the harvest,
  Traveling night and day,
Linking a nation together,
  Plodding along the way;
On to the distant cities,
  The ponderous freights go by,
Afar to the inland waters,
  Away to the mountains high.

Toiling along without ceasing,
  Beating through storms and rains,
Serving their country as workers
  On go the heavy trains.
It is they who carry the burdens
  From valley and mountain side;
Bringing the wealth of a nation
  Down to the ships at the tide.

And the passengers, riding in comfort,
  Close by the window panes,
Reading their books and stories,
  Sheltered from storms and rains,

Never begin to consider
  The work of the freights far and nigh,
And scarcely look up from their reading
  As the ponderous trains go by.

But the freights aren't looking for praises
  (Praises you buy and sell).
Work is their well-known watchword;
  Toil is the tale they tell.
For humanity needs their service,
  And the freights will go laboring on,
Serving the world as workers
  Till the work of the world is done.

1911

Road Song of the Crews

We're takin' her down the line, my boys.
The wheels are roarin' below.
Tunnel and track are answerin' back,
For we're lettin' her out, you know.
We're swingin' along on time, my boys.
The miles are reelin' away,
For we're takin' her down to the terminal town,
We're takin' her down to-day.

1911

By the Flare of the Northern Lights

In the frozen, silent Arctic,
  Where the Great Cold rules in might,
Where the day is ice-blue whiteness
  From the snow fields' blinding light,

Where the night is frozen stillness,
  And the cold stars twinkle and gleam,
And the frosty skies are lurid
  With the Northern Lights astream;

Violet, blue, and yellow,
  Copper, and rose—they glow,
Flickering, ghostly, flaring,
  Silent they come and go,

Weird, and dim, and haunting,
  They gleam on the ice-packed range,
Till the gaunt ice crags and ledges
  Flare, and color, and change,

There, in that endless silence,
  At rest—for evermore,
There sleeps a band of the Vanguard
  Who trailed to the northern shore.

They sleep through the frozen darkness;
  The stars are overhead,
And the streamers flame in the heavens,
  Sapphire, copper, and red.

No earthly care shall harm them,
  They shall rest while the world grows old,
For their Guardian Spirit watches:
  The pitiless Northern Cold.

At rest—with the stars above them,
  In the silent, long, long nights,
We'll leave them to the glory
  And the flare of the Northern Lights.

1913

The Roundhouse

The full moon shines serenely
  Through the gaps in the wisplike clouds,
And the smoke from the roundhouse rises
  And drifts aloft in shrouds
That melt as they mount in the stillness
  And dissolve in the phantom light,
Where the pale moon's silver glory
  Illumines the dusk of night.
In the shadowy vaults of the roundhouse,
  Where the grim, steel racers sleep,
The men of the "night shift" forces
  Their smoky vigil keep—
Hot and stained with labor,
  Weird and grimy bands,
Moving about the engines
  With torches in their hands.
They climb to the top of the boiler,
  They creep below to the pit,
And wherever a bolt has loosened
  They tighten her up a bit;
They crouch between the drivers,
  And there, by the torches' light,
Inspect the rods and bearings
  To see that all is right.

The Roundhouse

In the depths of the smoking circle
  There's an engine cleaned for the run,
Inspected and oiled for the journey—
  And the "hostler's" work is done.
The roar of her steam escaping
  Sets a-tremble the girders near,
And the men in the ringing deafness
  Shout in each other's ear.
But look! Out there in the darkness
  There's a twinkle of yellow light,
And slowly the roaring monster
  Slips out in the dead of the night.
She stops on the turntable center,
  Her steam rising high in the air,
And her little bell steadily clanging
  With warning mellow and clear.
The light of the moon's upon her,
  With shadows of gray and black,
As she swings like a ship at anchor
  Till she picks up her outbound track;
Then slowly rolls to the station
  To wait for the westbound train
That she'll haul through the night and darkness
  Till she's finished her run again.

A hush comes over the roundhouse,
  There's only a light here and there;
The silver moon shines in the heavens,
  And the smoke drifts high in the air.

The Valley of Play

In the Valley of Play where daisies grow,
Blue skies above, green fields below,
The children watch the flyers go
  Along the four-tracked line.

They pause awhile in the midst of play
To see the trains rush past each day
From ever so far and far away,
  Along the mysterious line.

They like to watch them running fast;
A trail of cars—a whistle's blast,
And the block swings back—for the flyer's
    passed,
  And dwindling down to a speck.

So they come to the orchard every day
And "make believe"—in their Valley of Play—
That they themselves are riding away
  Along the four-tracked line.

1912

What the Railroad Never Tells

The low-lying mist of the cold afternoon
  Has shrouded the land in its curtain of gray,
As our "Limited" hastens past valley and dale
  Through the cheerless, dreary day.

My thoughts go back to the dim, lost years
  That have passed since the railroad was first begun;
To the strife for supremacy, commerce, and trade,
  To the records of victories won.

And while I am dreaming of deeds in the past
  Whose story the years of the future will show,
It comes to me now, as it ne'er has before,
  How little we really do know—

How little we know of the sorrow and strife,
  Of the sadness and gloom, of the struggles and tears;
The dreams and the failures, the secrets and woes,
  Lost in the bygone years.

Every tunnel and cut, every bridge on the line
Has a story to tell that will never be known;
Each mile has its tale, each triumph its gloom,
Buried deep in the years that have flown.

And all of these secrets are lost in the past,
Where they sleep in oblivion—yes, and sleep well;
For only the railroad remembers the tale;
And the railroad will never tell.

1911

The Inventor

This is the child of my planning,
  Crown of the work of my mind,
Goal of the years of my toiling,
  The prize I have longed to find.

Oh, the Dreams I have constantly cherished,
  And the Hopes that have led me on;
And the Prayers to the Master-Builder
  That this—only this—be done.

And, God! what trails I've traveled!
  What failures, defeats, and pains
Have followed my endless searching,
  That the world might reap my gains!

But now the search is ended,
  The years of toil are gone;
My Dream of Dreams is finished;
  My Work at last is done.

Then will I praise the Master
  Who fashions every plan,
And may my work be useful
  In serving God and Man.

1912

At the End of the Night

The lights of the railroad shimmer
  In the river's lazy tide,
And the lamps on the bridges glimmer
  Where the waters shift and glide.

But soon the night will be ended;
  Slowly the heavens fade,
While the shadowy hills are blended
  With the nearer Works of Trade.

And while the star-points quiver;
  The dawn-light spreads, gray-blue;
The mist creeps up from the river;
  And the rails are wet with dew.

The awakening heaven changes;
  The river haze drifts low;
And there comes on the eastern ranges
  A soft, red-golden glow

That spreads where the clouds are drifting—
  Gold, and orange, and rose,
Lilac and crimson—shifting
  Where the cloud-belt flames and glows,

At the End of the Night

Till the sunlight flares on the ridges,
The dawn-mist clears away;
The car windows flash on the bridges,
And the world begins the day.

1913

In the Pullman Window

The evening dusk has dimmed the yard
  Where signals twinkle clear,
The trains are bright with electric light
  And happiness and cheer.

A "Limited" pulls slowly out,
  The switches clank below
As out she trails across the rails,
  Majestically and slow.

I watch the lighted windows pass,
  As on and on they glide;
A girl appears—and disappears;
  (One glimpse can hold you tied).

Dark, fluffy hair, uptilted nose,
  Dear lips and laughing eyes,
Unconscious there that *one* may care,
  Beneath the starlit skies.

I watch the train lights fade away
  And mock my vain endeavor;
Yet memory holds her in its folds,
  Though she is gone forever.

In the Pullman Window

I wonder who she is, and whom
  She loves and where she goes;
And if she dreams of Southern streams
  Or drifting Northern snows.

But far away, through shadowy hours,
  The flyer will whirl and roar;
And she will sleep—while lanterns keep
  Their watch on semaphore.

We know the pace those flyers set,
  We know that lives are dear,
Through storm and rain—God speed that
    train—
  And may the blocks show "Clear."

1912

The Answer

The question came from the idlers,
  Lost in laughter and play,
Knowing no work or purpose,
  Whiling their time away;
Indebted to many a worker
  For luxury, wealth, and ease,
Yet living in careless splendor,
  And seeking the things that please.

From the lips of these play-loving people,
  Bound by the harbor's bar,
A question was asked of their brothers
  Who battle in lands afar:
"Why have you left your pleasures
  To travel on distant trails?
Why have you gone to the world-ends
  With your bridges and cars and rails?

"Had you chosen the life that was given,
  And forgotten the hills and the sea,
You would doubtless be living in splendor,
  And luxury—even as we.
Explain to us then your folly;
  Tell us your tale, and why
You have turned from the chance that was offered
  To battle and toil and die?"

The Answer

The answer came from the vanguard,
  Out on the distant shore,
Building new harbors and highways,
  Seeking new lands to explore;
Planning and making great cities,
  Tilling the fresh-turned soil;
Moulding new kingdoms of commerce
  By endless labor and toil.

"Who are you to be talking of folly?
  And what have you done to know?
Have you traveled the distant ranges
  Where the trails are blocked with snow?
Have you felt the pangs of hunger?
  And known the pain of thirst?
Have you battled with storm and ocean
  When the hurricane roared its worst?

"Would you seek from us then our answer?
  Do you ask for our reasons, and why
We have turned from the chance that was offered
  To battle and toil and die?
Then follow the track of our armies;
  Go where our conquerors go;
Trail where our legions have traveled—
  Then perhaps you will know!"

1912

On the Line

Well, speakin' o' queer things, Jimmy,
It's funny what some people say
When they're talkin' o' railroads in general,
Which they know little of, by the way.

Last week I was down at the station,
An' some folks who were standin' near,
Were talkin' o' life on the railroad,
An' the work the men do through the year.

They said that our hours were easy,
That the chance for promotion was fine;
That pay was high in the service,
An' that work wasn't hard on the line.

Now, Jim, when they study a railroad,
From the trains as they ride to and fro,
They look wise—an' tell all about it,
For you see, Jim, they *think* they know.

But, Jimmy, it doesn't much matter,
What they talk of or what they may claim,
For do what you will on the railroad,
The work's pretty much all the same.

On the Line

It's the same hard work, an' we know it,
  Week in an' week out through the year,
An' the same long runs for the train crews.
  You know, Jim, you've worked with me here.

What's more, once you get on the railroad
  The chances are, Jim, that you'll stay.
There's something about it that holds you;
  Would *you* quit your job to-day?

An' as for these people who study
  Our work from a Pullman car,
Though they talk o' the things as they know 'em,
  They don't see the things as they are.

But, Jimmy, we've been at this business,
  Till we know every signal an' sign,
Yes, we know what it's like on the railroad,
  For, Jimmy—we've worked on the line.

1911

The Kingdom of Industry

Each girder, derrick, shaft, and block
At work on boat, and bridge, and dock,
Tells of our strength on every hand:
Power that conquers sea and land.

Though hidden ports lie far away,
Our steamers anchor in the bay;
Though desert wastes are parched and dry,
Over the sands our "Limiteds" fly.
Never a range so blocked with snow
But through the rock our tunnels go;
Never a gorge so wild and deep
But over the void our bridges creep;
By City and Ship, by Bridge and Car—
Our Kingdom of Industry stretches afar.
May we, then, boast of our Empire? Never,
For thine is the Kingdom for ever and ever.
1913

As the Westbound Train Goes By

Trailing away, off and away,
Into the west at the close of the day,
Speeding afar, fast and afar,
To the magical land of the evening star:
Into the sunset light you go
Leaving me here, and I long to know
Whom you carry, what joys and fears
Within you burn, what dreams and tears
Assail the hearts of those you bear
To the land where the sunset colors flare.
1915

The Lightships

Rising and falling, high and low, in the swell and the
salt-washed spray;
Over again and back again on the shifting ocean
floor;
Never a rest and never a pause through the length of
night and day,
We guard the gate from the open sea to the bay
and the dock-lined shore.

We bathe in the mist of the morning haze, as it clears
in the warmth of the sun,
And the ships and headlands come to view, on the
gold-gray, oily sea;
And the tideway slips and eddies and curls in its rest-
less, rock-bound run,
While around and above in the pale blue sky the
sea gulls circle free.

In the dead of the silent, noonday hour, when the sea
is a quiver of heat,
We rise and fall in the lazy swell, while the hot
ropes slap on the mast,
And in from the ocean or outward bound, where the
channel and sea-way meet,
We watch the ships on the languid sea as they
move serenely past.

When the blood-red sun sinks low in the west, and
the sea is a fire of light,
When the skies are all crimson and purple and
gold, and the water is colored below;
The lamps on the shore-line twinkle and gleam and
our beacon awakes for the night,
As we swing in the golden, eddying wash of the
tide-way's lazy flow.

Through the endless watch of the long, long night
our beacon lamp shines clear,
And far away in the lonely dark, the ships pick up
the light—
The welcome light that tells the crew the harbor now
is near,
And guides them safely through the void of the
ocean's unknown night.

The Lightships

We watch the big, black ships loom up across the
outer bars,
Gaunt phantoms of the mystic deep with porthole
lights aglow;
And 'way on high their roaring stacks stand black
against the stars,
While the ghostly phosphor gleams and flares
about the sea below.

When the cold gray fog comes creeping in with its
dreary, smoky pall,
And the blind ships' fog-blasts pierce the mist and
answer each other again,
Our warning fog-horn guides them on as they slowly
move and call,
While now and again comes the sound of bells
from afar in the misty rain.

In the driving whirl of the blinding storm, when the
hawsers creak and groan,
We rise high above, and we fall far away till the
plunging bow goes under.
And afar through the smoke of the roaring storm,
our fog-horn's bellowing moan
Mingles at times with the rattling crash of the
lightning and echoing thunder.

Never we tire—and night and day, in sun, or rain, or snow,
We welcome the giant deep-sea ships, as we swing in the ocean's foam;
And up on the bridge of the passing boats, where the Captains stand, they know
The work we do, and they bless the ship that guides them safely home.

1912

Nightsong

(A little boy, who in life used to watch the railroad trains and semaphores and signal lights, is buried in a cemetery close to the railroad tracks, where the block signals guard the right of way.)

Thou hast played long enough,
    little child,
Come to thy rest;
Trusting and undefiled,
Wondrously blest.
Slowly the sunset dies:—
Radiance gleaming,
Glow of the western skies
Easterly streaming.

Softly the last golden ray
Fades in the west,
Father and mother pray,
"Calm be thy rest."
So lay thee down to sleep,
Freed from all sorrow,
While thy belovèd keep
Watch till to-morrow.

Rest, little child, through the night,
Sleep without dream,
Stars in the upper height
Twinkle and gleam.
Railroad lights in the dell
Watch close above thee,
And as thou loved them well
Know that they love thee.

So the stars shall keep watch
in the sky,
Ever thy friends,
And the lights of the line nearby,
Till the night ends.
And thy mother shall pray
for thy rest,
Her vigil keeping;
So thou art more than blest,
Child—in thy sleeping.

1914

The Conquerors

The moon in the vault of heaven
  Shone down with ghostly glow,
On the field where the blood of the slaughtered
  Soaked black in the ground below.
The foe had fought bravely and fiercely
  For the cause they believed to be right,
But the legions of Rome were the victors,
  Ere the twilight had turned into night.

In the ghastly hours that followed
  The vultures kept watch till morn
O'er the helpless tortured soldiers:
  Battered, and gashed, and torn—
Slaughtered by hundreds and thousands,
  Hurled to the ranks of the dead,
Butchered with never a reason,
  But to hasten an empire's spread.

Nearby, in the camp of the victors,
  The watch fires burned through the night,
While the forms of the sleeping legions
  Were revealed by the flickering light.

Silent was all the encampment,
As still as the forms of the dead,
Save for the champing of horses
And the sentry's measured tread.

The soldiers were dreaming of triumphs,
Waiting them all at home,
For they were the hosts of the victors,
And their Empire city was Rome.
Conquerors they of all nations—
Ocean, and field, and wood;
Avengers of might and of power,
Victors of fire and blood.

But to-day there's another great army
Who toil with ship and car,
Their vanguard has crossed every ocean,
Their battle line stretches afar.
Over the world they travel
And conquer each country and land;
For they're building a Kingdom of Kingdoms,
An Empire Throne that will stand.

It is they who civilize nations,
Serving mankind far and wide;
And an empire built with that purpose
Is an empire built to abide.

The Conquerors

The army that's winning these battles,
The cohort that never will shirk,
Is the multitude army of labor,
The legion of toil and of work.

They're running our railroads and vessels,
They're at work in the city and town,
They're earning the bread of the nation,
Yet in earning it, reap no renown.
Conquerors they of all nations,
Conquerors worthy the name;
Who are victors by toil and endeavor,
And in conquering, look not for fame.

1911

Clearing the Way

Through the cold, drear autumn drizzle,
  And the fog's gray spectral veil,
There looms the twisted wreckage
  Strewn on the flyer's trail.
The big, steel cars lie covered
  With debris piled on high,
Truck, and spring, and coupler,
  Beam, and rail, and tie.

The battered, bloodstained roadbed,
  Torn for a hundred yards,
Gashed with the wreck of the far-strewn train,
  The work of the "crew" retards;
While hurled in lost confusion—
  Scarred, and crushed, and rent—
The cars and locomotives
  Lie piled with steelwork bent.

The great, grim, wrecking-derricks
  Toil at the helpless train,
While the creaking, groaning cables
  Are tightening under the strain.

Clearing the Way

The grating rasp of metal,
  And the clang of beams and bars,
Mingles with rattle of tackle
  As they lift the ponderous cars.

Over the twisted steelwork
  The men of the "break-down" train
Crawl on the battered Pullmans,
  Wet and soaked with rain.
But never the wind or weather
  May slacken a wrecking crew,
For there're other flyers waiting
  And they've got to get *them* through.

Nearby are the doctors and nurses
  (Rushed on a special train),
Cutting, and probing, and binding
  In the gloom of the misty rain;
While stretched beside the wreckage,
  Covered from foot to head,
With rain-soaked, blood-stained blankets,
  Lie the mangled forms of the dead.

There'll be many a family saddened,
  And many an "Extra" sold,
When they learn of the grim disaster
  In the fog and the autumn cold.

And every village and city
  Will be reading the news to-day,
For some one forgot an *order*—
  And they're clearing the signs away.

1912

The Ocean Trail

On the sandy beach of the long South shore,
Where the ocean's swell comes lazily in,
You can watch the gulls as they circle about,
And the porpoises plunging in playful rout;
You can see the ships steaming in and out,
In the track of the ocean trail.

They fly the colors of every land;
And they come from the ports of the seven seas,
Laden with wares from a distant shore,
Making their way to the nation's door,
Beating along as they have before,
Over the deep-sea lanes.

There's a ship to the south on the ocean blue—
An inbound liner from distant lands.
Crowds are waiting her down the bay:
Friends made happy by her to-day;
Can you hear her blowing to clear the way
Where the harbor meets the tide?

And further west, where the lightship rides,
There's a freighter bound for the China Sea;
Off for the land of the rising sun,

Loaded with merchandise, many a ton,
Steaming away on her distant run
To the eastern lands afar.

So every day the liners pass,
Ships of all nations and lands and tides,
By day, with the sunlit sea below,
At night, with a thousand lights aglow,
You can see the great ships come and go,
In the track of the ocean trail.

1911

Night in the Yards

The city was sleeping, but down in the yards
The smoke and the steam from the engines there
Were mingled above with the fog and the rain
In the misty, midnight air.

The semaphore lamps, as they gleamed through the dusk,
Pierced the night fog with their ring-circled light,
And the voices of bells in the darkness and gloom
Chimed, in the dreary night.

The echoing whistles from over the yard
Drifted afar on the midnight haze,
And the headlights of trains stealing in from the west,
Glowed with their misty rays.

I watched those trains as they passed through the yard,
Into the shadowy darkness borne,
Dim trains of Pullman sleeping cars,
Timed for the coast by morn.

The yard lights shone through the ghostly mist,
No pen can describe it as I saw it there,
With the endless succession of dim, black cars,
And the moving trains everywhere.

1911

Conclusions

In the noonday luncheon hour,
When we pause a bit for eatin',
  I sits upon the plankin' o' the pier.
I looks at the great harbor,
An' I does a little thinkin',
  On this busy, busy world about me here.

Beside the dock lie freighters,
Tramps of all the oceans,
  That beat around an' hail from God knows where;
You could sail, an' sail, an' sail
To the end of all the seas,
  But you'd surely find these ships a-loadin' there.

Agin' the blue above me,
I see the masts an' tackle,
  With the blocks an' ropes a-swingin' from the spars,
Where the colliers an' the lighters
An' the freighters an' the floats
  Are a-loadin' from the creakin', squeakin' cars.

The river's full o' traffic,
Tugs, an' tramps, an' ferries,
  A-steamin' up and down, an' here an' there,
An' the buildin's 'cross the water,
With their thousand gleamin' windows,
  Stand bright an' splendid in the autumn air.

There's the cries o' wheelin' sea gulls,
An' the voice o' distant whistles,
  An' the clashin' o' the couplers on the cars;
There's the city's dull, dull roar,
An' the lap an' swash o' the water,
  An' the rattlin' o' clankin' chains an' bars.

This harbor kind o' holds me,
I somehow sort o' love it—
  An' I know I couldn't keep away for long,
For I marvels at its bigness,
An' I glories in its greatness,
  An' its traffic an' its busy roarin' throng.

So I sits, and thinks, an' ponders,
An' I comes to my conclusions
  As I sees the harbor twinklin' in the sun.
I feel the Lord's a-watchin',
An' I know it's all His plannin';
  Yes, that's the way this mighty thing is done.

1912

Machinery Song

Clash, and clang, and ring—oh,
Ride, and glide, and slide—ho,
Back and forth where the oil is bright
On the gleaming steel that shines in the light,
Let her go,
Let her go,
Never a stop in night or day,
Roaring onward—that's our way.
By the drowsy drone of the whirling wheel,
By the light that winks on the shining steel,
You know,
You know,
The kind of work we do—so
Listen to the song we sing:
'Cross the land and tide—ho—
Clash, and cling, and clang, and ring,
Ride, and glide, and slide.

1912

Inside Information

Some were good, an' some were bad;
Some were funny, an' some were sad;
An' all along was light and shade
For that's the way the road was made.

It's changed a lot for the better now
But listen to me—I'll tell you how
Things used to go in the early days
Before they learned to mend their ways:
On the railroad,
On the railroad,
They went to the limit on the line.

The railroad—well it wasn't worse
Than other big ventures, an' o' course,
Like any old business you could name,
They had their share o' fame an' shame.
There were secret ways to "fix" the freights
An' secret ways to "dodge" the rates;
So they held up cars at the inland town
While the trains o' the "trust" were rushed right down.

On the railroad,
On the railroad,
They went to the limit on the line.

Oh the men and the women—(out o' sight)
As the trains were swingin' along at night
An' the tips they often gave (on the sly)
To "help things along" or to "pass things by."
An' the cars they called O. K. an' fine
When they weren't even fit to be out on the line;
Graft "higher up" an' graft "lower down"
At many a stop an' many a town,
On the railroad,
On the railroad,
They went the limit on the line.

But there were men who'd give half pay
To help some pal along the way;
For wherever the old steel track went through
Were plenty o' boys with hearts true blue.
I've seen a conductor pay full fare
For a poor old lady who hadn't her share
O' the coin o' the world—but her son was sick
An' it saved his life that she got there quick,
On the railroad,
On the railroad,
Oh, a lot was good on the line.

There's Joe who noticed a boy one day,
As he started to cross in the "Limited's" way.
Joe saved the kid—but his work was done,
(For a life was paid for the life he had won),
On the railroad,
On the railroad,
For a lot was good on the line.

Oh, the railroad dreamed, an' the railroad willed,
The railroad blessed, an' the railroad killed,
An' wrong went along with the right you know,
For that's the way that things would go
On the railroad,
On the railroad,
There was light an' shade on the line.

1912

The Harbor Lights

Lights along the rivers, on the docks, and on the buildings—
Lamps that tower skyward in the offices aglow—
Twinkling chains of gold extending far along the shoreline—
Green and red lights gliding to and fro.

The circling gulls have seen them, wheeling round the docks at sunset,
And the crowds on bridge and ferry know the lamps that glisten clear;
While the seamen on the vessels inward bound from foreign waters
Watch with joy the welcome harbor lights appear.

There are yellow pin points shining from a thousand city windows,
And the arc lights on the docks and on the bridges twinkle white;
Here and there the emerald-greens of distant vacuum lamps are glowing,
Adding color to the gleaming chains of light.

The electric-lighted bridges span the traffic-studded river;
While the slowly crawling trolleys and the elevated trains,
Crossing and recrossing with their ceaseless tide of people,
Blink like many twinkling diamond chains.

At the entrance of the harbor, where the rivers meet the ocean,
And the faithful little pilot-boats their endless vigil keep,
There the lonely lights are watching—flash and darkness—flash and darkness;
Beacons, welcoming the couriers of the deep.

A thousand points that gleam and flare from boat and bridge and building—
Gliding lights reflected in the shifting tide below—
Lamps that tower skyward, and beacons at the entrance—
Green and red lights moving to and fro.

1912

Transportation Song

Servants of the land,
Toilers of the deep,
Far across the sand,
Over crag and steep.
Blasting through the ridges,
Beating through the snow,
Building cañon bridges
Where the line shall go.
Steering ocean courses,
Never sailed by man,
Crushing nature's forces
To serve our mighty Plan.
Faithful here we stand,
We who never sleep;
Servants of the Land,
Toilers of the Deep.

1912

Water Power

From the eddying, racing water,
By the gates of the towering dam,
We plunge down—down—through the tunnel,
Through the dark of the steel-bound tunnel;
Through the whirling crush of the tunnel,
Till we crash on the turbine blades—
Oh yes!
And we swirl on the turbine blades.
And the turbines thrill with power
And the dynamos wake with life,
Tremble with surging life,
Throb with electric life.
And through each pulsing hour
In our vaults of stone and steel,
We echo our Song of Power
As the turbines race and reel.

1913

The Man Who Knows

There's a lonely cut in the mountain chain
  Where the railroad line goes through;
There's a man who guards with a watchful eye
Each bolt and plate and rail and tie,
And watches the thundering trains go by
  As they roar through the echoing cut.

And down the polished lines of steel
  (Once an Indian trail)
At a bend in the stream by the mountain flank,
Where the forest and brush grow thick and rank,
And the line skirts close to the river bank,
  The double bridges stand.

One day, when the rising flood-swept stream
  Had reached the record mark,
The man at the cut held his watch in his hand,
He was waiting the flyer (you'll understand
He was proud that day) for his own son's hand
  Held the lever that ruled the train.

He had just been promoted that very day,
  And his father alone in the cut
Was waiting to cheer as the train went through;

He listened! Yes—there her whistle blew!
And she'd soon be near, for the old man knew
She was just beyond the stream.

He paused again—stopped short, looked up,
And gripped his flag stick tight,
For the rumbling groan of a distant clash
Boomed out—and the mountains reechoed the crash;
The old man listened, and quick as a flash
He thought of the weakened bridge.

He thought of the chance for life and death—
And he thought of the engineer,
Had the flyer passed when the girders fell?
Which bridge had gone? (For the man knew well
Some bridge had gone)—but the blocks would tell;
And he hurried around the curve.

Blindly he stumbled along the ties,
Till he came to the telltale blocks;
* "Danger," they showed; no train was near;
He thought of the bridge, and the flood-washed pier
And the rumbling boom that reached his ear,
And he felt that the worst had come.

* In one particular type of block signal which is now coming into fairly general use, the normal position of the signal arm is at "Danger," the block signal showing "Clear" only when a train is approaching and the block ahead is clear.

The Man Who Knows

He knelt and made the sign of the Cross—
  The danger block swung Clear,
"Clear"! All clear along the way!
(For there's One whom even the blocks obey)
He heard a whistle from far away,
  And he knew that the train was saved.

Are you wondering how the thing was done?
  Or the way the train came through?
Then go to the time-scarred mountain chain,
Where the rocks ring back to the roar of the train
And the old man watches through storm and rain—
  Go ask the man—he knows.

1912

Where There's Never a Dress Parade

One day I was watching the evening parade,
The sunset shone on the ranks nearby
With their rifles and swords flashing bright in the light
And their banners and colors on high.

Along the edge of the field, a crowd
Had gathered to look at the soldiers there,
While the measured strains of the regiment's band
Came clear on the evening air.

As I gazed on the scene with its color and life,
Its bands and its banners, its tassels and braid,
I thought of another great army of men,
Where there's never a Dress Parade.

I thought of the trains rushing on through the night,
Waking the echoes of mountain and glen;
And I knew that the men who were running those trains,
Might never see home again.

Where There's Never a Dress Parade

The army of commerce toils on, night and day;
And the world cares but little, and little it knows,
But the work never stops, and the army toils on,
While the volume of traffic still grows.

And few are the people who think of those men,
Or the toll of their ranks in the course of a year,
Or the work which they do and the lives which they guard
While the passengers ride without fear.

For the vast tide of commerce sweeps on in its course,
While the army that labors is little repaid.
Yes—the work of the railroad forever goes on,
But there's never a Dress Parade.

1910

The "Mile-a-Minute" Trains

Every minute along the line
Counts when the trip is done;
Every division along the way
Means so many hours to run;
And sixty minutes is sixty miles
Whether it shines or rains.
They can't afford to waste their time
On the mile-a-minute trains.

There's ease and comfort within the cars,
Much like a good hotel,
With porter or waiter to come to your chair
When you press the electric bell.
And books and papers, and valets and maids,
As you cross the mountain chains;
But it's different up in the cab ahead
On the mile-a-minute trains.

Whenever an order is sent to a crew,
They know that it means "Obey,"
For it's life and death—and they've got to be there,
On the job, or they're fired that day.

In other work where rules are slack;
  Things happen, and no one complains,
But the men of the line—Oh, they'd better keep
    straight,
  On the mile-a-minute trains.

A lot depends on the way things work;
  Levers, and locks, and bars;
Brakes and bearings, bolts and valves,
  For the big steel Pullman cars;
Rails and ballast, lights and guards,
  Rivets and rods and chains;
If things aren't right, God help 'em all,
  On the mile-a-minute trains.

1911

The Fulfillment

The works of steel and iron,
  The monuments of man,
Are but the great fulfillment
  Of Thy all-knowing plan.

Thine is the Hand that fashions
  The racers of the rails,
And builds the giant steamers
  That ply the ocean trails.

And Thine the strength that conquers
  The cañons and the ridges,
That drives the rock-hewn tunnels
  And hangs the dizzy bridges.

That rears our towered cities,
  And runs our ringing drills,
That turns our whirring turbines
  And drives our whirling mills.

In all our hands have fashioned;
  In all our brains have known;
We pay to Thee our homage
  We give to Thee Thine own.

Thus, to the distant ages—
  Thus, since life began—
Our works are the fulfillment
  Of Thy controlling plan.

1912

Seaward Lights

Lamps along the coast-line twinkle;
Far to the south the Sandy Hook Light
Flashes to seaward.
Along the shore the lullaby wash of the lazy "ground-swell,"
And a distant bell-buoy faintly tolls
Now and again.

1915

The Panama Canal

A plan, a dream and a landing,
A flag in the breeze unfurled;
A task begun in the glare of the sun
Before the eyes of the world.

A battle with rock and boulder,
A fight with fever and slide,
Through sun and rain, derrick and train
Toiling side by side.

Scores of great steam-shovels,
An army of engineers,
Hosts who toil in the rock-strewn soil
Scorning pain and fears.

Day by day the battle,
Seemingly never won,
Years go past—but then—at last
The giant task is done.

Sunshine warm on the palm trees,
Lazy the sea and sky,
Serene, in state, through lock and gate
The ships of the world go by.

March, 1916

Aeroplanes

By day the blue above us,
Below—on the dusty plain,
A factory stack, and a railroad track
And a slowly crawling train.

Cities pass below us,
Village, farm, and home,
And the sandy shore where the breakers roar
And wash in a line of foam.

By night the stars above us,
The moondrift on the clouds
And far below the land-lights glow
From mystic shadow shrouds.

Soaring above the ocean
And flying far and free
From our starry height we see the light
Of a ship on the moonlit sea.

March, 1916

Factories

Chill of the dawn
A dreary mist
And a city that wakes to toil.
Youthful tired faces, aroused from sleep
Wistfully brushing aside their star-dreams
Till the stillness of another night shall come.
The long deep blast of a factory whistle
And another
And another—from here and there about the city.

A thousand windows—cold and chill
And sombre portals through which the hosts of toilers pass
Soon to be lost in the labyrinth of the dreary buildings.

A low, sullen murmur in the dawn
Growing and growing
Till all the machinery
Pulses in chorus.
Hours—slowly—pass,
To the reverberating monotony of whirling and clashing and clanking machines.

Factories

At noon—a brief pause
And again the toil goes on
Hour by hour.

Evening shadows come
The pulsing of the factory dies down:
A strange uncanny stillness
Broken only by the footfalls of the weary hosts returning home
To eat their evening meal,
And then to rest in sleep,
Finding again the star-dreams
That shall refresh their tired souls
Until the coming of another dawn.

March, 1916

Iron Ore Mines

(Lake Superior District)

Tunnels of red rock,
Chill and dripping moisture,
Shafts and hoists
Reluctantly echoing to the muffled hollow booming of distant blasts,
Dampness and dimness,
Narrow gauge tracks and switches,
And the grimy faces of the miners,
Who toil in the subterranean mazes.
Brown—red, moisture-soaked planks, and ladders and supporting columns.
From somewhere in the far away tunnels
The dull reverberation of a rock drill
That wakes the silence of the sullen caverns.

March, 1916

Steel Works

White-hot metal—flaring;
Molten streams of fire,
And in the giant rolling-mills
Massive machines

That clash and whirl and roar
Throughout the fevered hours.
Vast dusky interiors
Where huge electric cranes
Far up among the dim roof-girders
Roll back and forth
Majestically
Bearing beneath them
Ponderous forgings
To mould the world anew.

March, 1916

International

Hosts of workers
Toiling for their daily bread
Knowing far better than captains and kings
The meaning of World Wide Brotherhood.
International—the banner of their labor.
These it is who shall form the vanguard
Of the new Federation of the World.

March, 1916

Terminal Dreams

When the miles of life are past,
And the train is home at last,
  And the signal lights grow dim and
    melt away,
When the last long run is over,
And we cross that boundary river,
  We'll have rest—God knows we'll
    need it—on that day.

1912

To the Lights of the Lines

Lights of the Lines, receive the thanks
  Of one who, now returning,
Sees on the well-known river banks
  Your welcome signals burning.

Now, as in bygone saddened nights,
  Gleaming with hope you lend me
Strength and repose; Oh steadfast lights,
  Ever may you befriend me!

Signals that guard the "right of way"
  Into the darkness blending,
Ever so far—and far away,
  Over the world extending;

Sentinel lights that gird the earth,
  To you my songs are given,
Knowing them far below your worth
  However much I've striven.

Little the world is like to know
  All you have done to aid me,
Nor can my poor words ever show
  How you have cheered and stayed me;

For, in the night, you brought to me
  Hope, in the hours of sadness,
Light that enabled me to see,
  Courage, and faith, and gladness.

Nor is compassion an offense,
  And, in the Great To-morrow,
Surely the Lord will recompense
  Those who have lightened sorrow.

Then do I bring to you my praise,
  You who have stood beside me;
And to the end of all my days
  May you be near to guide me!

1914

Afar on the Rails and Tideways

Afar on the rails and tideways,
  Throughout the night and day,
The trains and the ships are toiling
  On the land and the ocean way.

Looming above the waters
  In the crimson evening glow,
Black against the sunset,
  The great ships come and go.

And through the mist of the valley,
  When night creeps down at last,
Like glowing ghosts in the darkness,
  The lighted trains go past.

Then Oh, for a Master Painter!
  Oh, for a Master Hand!
To paint such scenes on canvas
  That men might understand.

Would that some fire-souled dreamer,
  Whose brush held a magic sway,
A Raphael, Titian, or Turner,
  Would take up the work to-day!

That the world might see and remember
The wonder of it all,
And understand the message
Of our commerce, great and small.

Then Oh, for a Master Painter!
Oh, for a Master Hand!
To paint the *work* on canvas,
That the world might understand.

1911

Apology

Kingdoms of industry, realms of tide and rail,
Snow-crested peaks, and cities thronged with life,
Forgive the feeble hand that strives to paint—
And only half suggests the wonder, and the power,
And the glory of the things my eyes have seen.

1912

The Terminal

The skies above the city change and glow;
And radiant, golden clouds are trailed across
The softly fading blue, while here and there
About the streets, the lights begin to gleam.
The busy shops along the crowded lanes
Are bright within, while down the asphalt streets
The endless lines of restless autos crawl,
And stop, and start, and move ahead again.
The overcrowded trolleys jolt and clang—
Aglow with lights—while all along the way
A countless host incessantly goes by.

And where the roaring city's busy tide
Seems blackest in its shifting, moving stream,
There, massive in its solemn dignity,
The terminal stands—its solid granite walls
Touched by the last faint crimson sunset glow,
Its open portals black with pulsing life
That goes to distant lands, or comes from far.

Within the terminal—vast and vaulted high—
The footsteps seem to deaden as they fall,
And crowds that hurried in with careless tread
Slacken their haste—as if in some great hall

Where Majesty and Power ruled in state;
And far on high, the friezes on the walls,
The angles of the stone, and towering roof,
Look down in solemn stillness on the crowds
That move, and shift, and eddy far below,
In concourse, waiting room, or lofty hall.
And over all, the gleam of softened light
Kindles, and warms the building with its glow.

Among the crowds what stories may be guessed
And read in all the faces gathered there!—
Sadness and joy, expectancy, regret,
Grief and despair, and idle thoughtlessness,
Hatred, and pain, and love, and buoyant hope,
In young and old—in men of all estates,
Some portion of their life and thought and work
Is mirrored on each face among the crowd.

Beside the train-gates, in the Concourse vast,
The restless hundreds watch with longing eyes
The passengers, their loved ones come or go;
While near at hand, the grim, steel flyers wait,
That trail afar to distant, dreamed-of lands,
And link the scattered cities of the realm.

From far away, above the drone
And hum of conversation in the halls,

The cry of "All aboard" rings deep and clear
And echoes from the walls, and wanders lost
In ceiling's arching curve and vaulted roof;
While, far below, some "Limited" pulls out—
Out to the world-known cities of the land.

1912

The Ruling Law

Master of Commerce, King of land and seas,
  Maker of all, and Judge of might and awe;
Forbid that in our work we should forget
  That all is subject to thy Ruling Law.

Cities and towers reared against the sky,
  Far-trailing trains that conquer cliff and hill;
Wires and lines that link the farthest lands—
  These and their like, we fashion as we will.

And should we boast of what our hands have made,
  May we remember, Lord, that Thou art nigh—
For we could hold no sway, nor might, nor power,
  Were it not granted to us from on high.

And who are we to claim Thy work as ours,
  To boast, or to presume to build and rear?
Save in the might and power of Thy hand
  That gives us strength to serve Thee without fear.

Then may we lay our conquering strands of steel,
  And build our towering ships to rule the seas,
And rear our Works, with girder, block, and stone,
  Strong in the faith that Thou art Lord of These.

1912

L'Envoi

The rails and docks and buildings now grow dim;
The sunset glow is in the western sky;
And harbor lights and yard lights twinkle now.
The night-shift's on—and others are in quest
Of quiet after toil—their needed rest.
And so farewell, lights of the rail and tide;
And while the world sleeps on, your watch still keep
O'er distant steelshod trail and ocean deep.

1911

TIDES OF COMMERCE

VERSE OF THE RAILROAD

By WM. CARY SANGER, JR.

"Tides of Commerce," by Wm. Cary Sanger, Jr., in cloth binding, gilt top, 75 cents, by mail 80 cents. For sale by Putnams, 2 W. 45th St. (just West of 5th Ave.), New York, or from John L. Grant, Bookseller, Utica, N. Y.

"Mr. Sanger is original—in the terms in which we apply that word to verse that expresses things with freedom and conviction—forceful, and has a compelling way of catching and holding the imagination. Mr. Sanger sets forth some views that are extremely interesting and valuable. He seeks in these poems to embody the romantic substance of commercialism. What's more, he succeeds admirably. There is both good and bad in the commercial conscience, he declares, but its ideal is to further the happy progress of humanity. One cannot deny vision to a poet who publishes his poems in the 'hope that it may do its part in calling attention to the interest and romance in the development of transportation and commerce and to the men whose lives are spent in the various departments of this work and service.' The vigor and sweep of line, that riotous and swift tenderness of strength associated with natural and invented forces, are in these poems. Hardly any object or subject connected with commercial enterprises but what is brought into the glow of Mr. Sanger's verse. To get the effect of the book it must be read as a whole, and then one can better appreciate such poems as 'Electricity,' 'Electric Locomotives,' 'The Roundhouse,' 'The Kingdom of Industry,' 'Terminal Dreams,' and many other verses of modern commercial inspiration."—*William Stanley Braithwaite, Boston Evening Transcript.*

"There is beauty as well as strength and thrill in Mr. Sanger's verse."—*Detroit Free Press.*

"The little volume will be a surprise to those who see nothing poetical in locomotives, electricity, steam, etc."—*Buffalo Commercial.*

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"There is a vigor and a swing to the forty or more selections in Mr. Sanger's book that will please all readers. He touches with a sure hand, and one is never left in doubt as to his meaning. He gives us new thoughts about the lumbering freights, the railroad yards, the commerce of the seas, the swift dash of the electric, the toilers in yards and roundhouses and upon tracks and docks. We begin to realize, perhaps as never before, that here is a great arm which we have regarded as quite commonplace, but which at the same time is quite as important as any endeavor in which mankind is engaged. Mr. Sanger's verses will be enjoyed, not alone for their freshness and vigor, but for the skill and fine writing displayed in their composition. His verses will be favorites with all who read them, not only because of those qualities mentioned above, but for their common sense and understandability."—*Utica Observer.*

"The poems show the enthusiasm of the author for his subject and his talent as a poet. He dignifies labor by showing its wonders and the part it plays in the world's commerce. The poems appeal to all classes; those who labor and those who are now resting after labor nobly performed."—*Utica Daily Press.*

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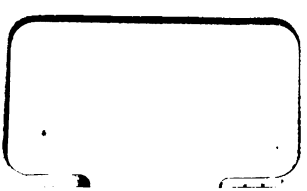

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